AN ACCOUNT OF A LARGE SILVER PLATE, OF ANTIQUE *BASSO RELIEVO*, *Roman* Workmanſhip,

Found in *Derbyſhire*, 1729.

Read before the Antiquarian Society of *London*, 8 *April*, 1736.

By *WILLIAM STUKELEY*.

LONDON:

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

To my learned Friend,

ROGER GALE, Esq;

THE *Roman* Plate lately found in *Northumberland*, of which you sent me an account: being, at present, the entertainment of the Curious; by way of return I transmit to you the following paper, which I wrote 6 years ago, upon a like piece of plate then found in *Derbyshire*. This had the misfortune to fall into ignorant hands, and therefore the publick knew nothing of it. But 'tis somewhat remarkable, that two such noble *Roman* antiquities of the same kind, should be found among us in five years space: And they are the only two of the kind now known. They are exactly of the same size, metal, shape and manner of workmanship, therefore of the same age and use.

This of ours was found 9th *June* 1729 in *Ristey* Park *Derbyshire*, late the seat of the Lady *Gray*. Plowing up some fresh ground, the plough struck upon it. It lay not above 3 inches deep. A bit of it was broken off by the plough. At first appearing black, the servants that found it, broke it into several pieces, not thinking it was silver. And that part which had been lowest in the ground was very brittle. Nothing now remains intire, but the middle part, in Lady *Aston*'s possession, of *Aston*, *Cheshire*, the Lady of the Manor. As many of the fragments as could be got together, were reduc'd into form, and a model of it in past-board, with a drawing upon it in the natural bigness, was sent me by the Reverend Mr. *Hardy* Minister of *Melton Mowbray*. I have engag'd Mr. *Vander Gucht* to engrave it, that these two sister plates may come out together, and by the same hand. They are of like workmanship, being cast; the figures in relief are solid, not hollow underneath or emboss'd. They have been afterwards touch'd up with a tool. Both have a square foot or

frame at bottom, to ſtand on. This elevates them a little above the board; ſomewhat like our ſalvers or waiters. They are both of the ſame ſhape, the edge turn'd upward in a diſh-form, or border, which is ornamented with fruitage-work. Both of the ſame dimenſions, 20 inches long, 15 broad.

This of *Derbyſhire*, as to the ornament, conſiſts of hunting and rural figures: particularly a very antique kind of temple, with a ſtatue in it, of *Pan*. Whence I take this to have belong'd to ſome temple of that God, probably that at *Rome* now remaining, call'd the temple of *Faunus*, who is the ſame deity. The *Northumberland* plate for a like reaſon, has belong'd to a temple of *Apollo*. And as it ſeems to me by the drawing, in compliment to *Auguſtus*, the face of the god is repreſented like him. The next ſitting figure is like *Livia*, the next ſtanding figure like *Julia*, and ſo I ſuppoſe the whole *Auguſtan* family is taken in with the reſt. I ſee nothing that forbids me thinking both plates as old as his time. The work is very good, tho' not of the utmoſt elegance. Nor was it neceſſary for an utenſil of this kind, to carry fruits on and offerings, *&c.* There are at preſent 7 pound weight in ſilver. And they tell me, it had been gilt.

The whole compoſition of the *relievo*, conſiſts in rural ſports, employments, and religion. The temple has a particular air of antiquity and ſimplicity. The Fronton is ſupported only by 3 wooden pillars, one ſtanding in the middle; no elegant baſes, capitals or entablature. Within is ſeen the image of a deity. The Temple ſtands in a kind of incloſure, to keep cattle out; and within that are a couple of trees, to indicate its being within a grove or copſe.

Another part of the *relievo* is a countryman looking after horſes, holding forth an herb in his hand. Whence we will ſuppoſe him skill'd in curing the diſeaſes incident to thoſe creatures. The whole brings into my mind the ſtory of *Virgil* and his Eclogues. He himſelf was entertain'd in *Auguſtus* his ſtables. He prognoſticated the goodneſs of colts, was a farrier and keeper there, at his firſt riſe. Again, there is a ſhepherd tending his flock of ſheep and goats, another ſhepherd milking the ſhe goats. The antients kept their goats and ſheep together, as here repreſented.

Biſq; die numerant ambo pecus, alter & hædos,

ſays *Virgil.* In another paſſage

Compulerantq; greges Corydon & Thyrſis in unum;
Thyrſis oves, Corydon diſtentas lacte capellas.

In one place is a country fellow ſleeping, to ſhow the quiet and repoſe of the country life.

Sæpe levi ſomnum ſuadebit inire ſuſurro.

In another are boys riding on tigers, and hunting a boar. In the angle is a head in profile, of a ruſtic, ſimple youth. Oppoſite to it a female face, a nymph or country girl. The other two angles are loſt, probably a like ſhepherd and ſhepherdeſs.

In the middle of the whole, is a grand compartiment, ſquare. 7 inches long, $5\frac{1}{2}$ broad. This is exactly equal and correſpondent to the ſquare baſis underneath. The latter meaſure is half a *Roman* foot. This is wrought with the hunting of a wild boar, the figures in a good old, *Greek* taſte. This too was the ſport of the ſhepherds.

Quid prodeſt quod me ipſe animo non ſpernis Amynta,
Si dum tu ſectaris apros, ego retia ſervo.

Again

Aut acres venabor apros, non me ulla vetabunt
Frigora Parthenios canibus circundare ſaltus.

So much for what is preſerv'd of the argument in the ſculpture. Round the ſquare baſis at the bottom, and on the outſide of it, is this inſcription, cut rudely with a ſharp ſtyle or pointed inſtrument,

EXSVPERIVS EPISCOPVS ECLESIAE BOGIENSI DEDIT.

'Tis

'Tis in *Roman* characters of the 4th century; and tho' it relates nothing to the original plate, yet it opens the hiſtory of the plate it ſelf, which I ſhall purſue, in anſwering as well as I can, to the following queſtions.

I. Who this *Exuperius Epiſcopus* was?

II. Where is this *Eccleſia Bogienſis?*

III. How this plate came into *England?*

As to the firſt, who this *Exuperius* the biſhop was? In the 4th Century, ſays *Mezeray*, hiſt. *France*, the *Gallican* Church produc'd a great many holy biſhops: Such as *Hilary* biſhop of *Poictiers*, St. *Martin* biſhop of *Tours*, an apoſtolic man, *&c.* concluding with *Exuperius de Tholouſe*, who lived in A. D. 405.

I believe *Exuperius* was biſhop of *Bayeux*, before he was biſhop of *Tholouſe*, for as ſuch he is recited by St. *Marthane:* always ſaid to be a perſon of great piety, and numbred among the Saints. In the year 250, *Saturninus* preach'd Chriſtianity at *Tholouſe*. St. *Hierom de monogamia ad Ageruchiam viduam*, ſpeaking of the ravages and irruptions of the barbarous nations upon *France*, in his time, ſays: " I cannot without tears make mention of *Tho-*" *louſe*. That it is not yet deſtroy'd, is owing to the merits of " that holy biſhop *Exuperius*.

St. *Hierom*, I find, was an acquaintance of his. He addreſſes his comment on *Zacharias*, to *Exuperius* biſhop of *Tholouſe*, and that in a long prologue; where he ſays many handſome things of him, of his learning, charity, ſtudying the Scriptures, his zeal and piety. St. *Hierom* began his ſtudies at *Rome*, but finiſh'd them in *France*, then famous for learning. He was extremely diligent in finding out books and perſons of learning. Books he either bought or tranſcrib'd, particularly he tells us, at the city of *Triers*, he copy'd with his own hand, a great volume of Synods, collected by St. *Hilary*. Now it was that he contracted an intimacy with *Exuperius*. In his 4th Epiſtle to *Ruſticus*, he ſays, " the holy biſhop of *Tholouſe Exuperius* was an imitator " of the widow of *Sarepta*, fed others whilſt he hungred him-" ſelf, gave away all his ſuſtenance to the poor. Yet none can " be richer than he, adminiſtring our Lord's body on a wicker " plate, and his blood in a common glaſs, *&c.*" In another epiſtle, he ſays of him, that in time of a plague, he melted down the

the church plate to support the neceſſitous. This ſame *Exuperius* dedicated the heathen temple of *Minerva* at *Tholouſe* to the bleſſed Virgin.

A. D. 206. The *Alans*, *Vandals*, *Sueves*, *Burgundians* and divers other barbarous people paſſed the *Rhine* into *Gaul*, and made moſt horrid havoc. In 419. *Vallia* the *Gothic* king fix'd his ſeat at *Tholouſe*. In fine, *Exuperius* ſuffer'd martyrdom for the chriſtian faith.

There was another *Exuperius* an excellent Rhetorician, mention'd by *Auſonius*, Epig. 17.

Exuperi memorande mihi, facunde ſine arte.

He was preceptor to the ſons of *Dalmatius* brother to *Conſtantine the great:* he liv'd ſomewhat earlier than our biſhop. So much for the firſt article we propos'd to ſpeak on.

II. Where is this *Eccleſia Bogienſis?* To which I anſwer, 'tis undoubtedly one of the towns of *Bouges* in *Tourain*, in *France*. Each a village on a brook flowing into the *Loire*, between *Angiers* and *Saumur*, one call'd now old *Bouge*, and another a mile off, call'd great *Bouge*, where there is a bridge over the brook. It was to this church that St. *Exuperius* gave this elegant piece of plate. Whether it was his native town, or had been his Cure, I can't pretend to ſay, at this time of day: but being gilt, it was deſign'd as an ornament to the altar. There are many inſtances now in *France*, of theſe kind of heathen antiquities, for their art as well as matter, apply'd to like uſes. They thought there was no harm in it, or they did not underſtand the heathen figures upon them, and ſometimes they miſunderſtood them, as of ſome ſcripture ſtory.

Theſe towns of *Bouges* are very memorable in our *Engliſh* chronicles, particularly for a battle fought there in the church-yard and very church of the one, the day before *Eaſter Sunday*, *A. D.* 1421, and the Soldiers were quarter'd in the church-yard and church of the other. Whence we have reaſon enough to imagine the occaſion of this plate of ours coming into *England*. The battle was fought by the *Engliſh* under the conduct of the Earl of *Clarence* brother to our *Henry* V. then reigning, againſt the confederated *French* and *Scotch*. I ſhall recite a plain and

ſhort

ſhort account of that action, from the *Engliſh*, *French* and *Scotch* hiſtorians collated together.

A. D. 1420. whilſt *Harry* V. was puſhing on his Conqueſts in *France* with great rapidity, the Earl of *Vendoſme* chancellor of *France*, was ſent from *Charles* the *French* King, to renew the ancient league between *France* and *Scotland*, and to demand aid of the *Scots*, to ſupport them againſt the *Engliſh*. Whereupon *John Stewart* Earl of *Buchan*, 2d Son to *Robert* Duke of *Albany*, with other nobles, knights and gentlemen, and 7000 Soldiers were order'd to paſs into *France*.

They arriv'd early in 1421. when *Thomas Plantagenet* the brave Duke of *Clarence*, brother to *Harry* V. was at this time lord lieutenant to the king, and general of his armies in *France*. The king himſelf went to *England* after *Chriſtmas*, with his new queen to be crown'd. The Duke of *Clarence* ſoon enter'd upon action, took a ſelect number out of all the garriſons in *Normandy*, and placing himſelf under *Angiers* upon the *Loire*, defy'd the enemy to fight. They not coming out, he ravaged the country, and encamp'd at *Beaufort* in *Touraine* between *Angiers* and *Saumur*. There he underſtood, that the Duke *d' Alenſon* the *Dauphin*'s lieutenant was at *Bouges* not far off with the *Scots* newly arriv'd, and that they had form'd a ſtratagem to ſurprize him. This was on *Saturday* being *Eaſter-Eve*, *March* 22, 1421. The *French* were encourag'd to this, on the account of the approaching holydays, thinking the *Engliſh* would be more lax in military guard, for that reaſon. And ſome ſay there was an 8 days truce between them, becauſe of the holy feſtival. *Andrea Fogoſa* an *Italian* who was ſcout-maſter, brought the account to the Duke of *Clarence*, whilſt he was at dinner. It's thought he was a traytor, and leſſened the number and ſtrength of the enemy. However the fact was confirm'd by 4 ſtragling *Scots* priſoners, taken a foraging and brought before the Duke. The Duke upon this thinking to be beforehand with them in their own craft, ſuddenly took horſe and arms, and reſolv'd to fall upon them, crying out with earneſtneſs, They are all our own. Only a party of horſe that were firſt ready, accompany'd him He order'd the bows and bills to ſtay in the camp under the command of his baſe ſon *John*. The foot ſoldiers were to follow him as ſoon as they could.

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The Duke had on a ſuit of armor very magnificent, as was the faſhion of that time, in perſons of his rank. And upon his helmet was a chaplet or ducal coronet of gold, ſet with many precious ſtones. He ſoon met the *French* vanguard, under the conduct of *John de la Croix*, at little *Bouge*. He immediately ſet upon them, they fled into the church for ſafety, ſhutting the doors, and thence into the ſteeple, as a caſtle of defence. The Duke ſpent ſome time in forcing them, whilſt the *Scots* took the alarm who were quarter'd at great *Bouge* on the other ſide the brook or rivulet. They arm in great fright. The Earl of *Buchan* inſtantly ſent 30 archers, whilſt the others were getting ready, to poſſeſs the bridge, which was the way the enemy muſt come. And *Hugh Kennedy*, who was quarter'd with 100 of his men in the church at great *Bouge*, advanced immediately.

The *Engliſh* horſe would not take the bridge for the bow-men. Whereupon the Duke alighted firſt, the reſt do ſo too, and they ſoon force their way. Whilſt ſome of his men ſcatteringly paſs the bridge, the Duke mounts his horſe again, with intent to purſue them. At that inſtant *Buchan* comes up with 200 horſe, and a moſt furious fight enſues. The *Scots* on one hand were eager to get a name and ſignalize their valor, on their firſt arrival; to refute thoſe taunts which the *French* were apt to throw upon them, ſaying they came thither only for wine and victuals: the *Engliſh* were doubly incens'd at the *Scots*, at home always making inroads on their borders, now purſuing them into foreign parts. So that nothing can be imagin'd more rude, than the encounter between theſe two ſiſter-nations. And none fought more valiantly than the Duke of *Clarence* himſelf; he was among the foremoſt and the thickeſt of the combat. He was likewiſe too eaſily diſtinguiſh'd by the richneſs of his habiliments. After he had been a good while the common mark of the enemies fury, Sir *John Swinton* with a launce grievouſly wounded him in the face, thro' the bars of his viſor. Whilſt he was confus'd at this accident, the Earl of *Buchan* ſtruck him on the head with a heavy battle-ax, and fell'd him to the ground: and he was the firſt man of the *Engliſh* ſlain.

Upon his death, his men gave way, tho' the battle laſted till night parted them; yet the *Engliſh* were not above 1 to 4 in number of the enemy. There were 1500 *Engliſh* of the common ſoldiers ſlain, many of the prime quality, ſeveral taken priſoners; and above 1000 of the enemy ſlain, with ſeveral perſons of note. The baſtard of *Clarence* and Earl of *Salisbury*, after the Duke was march'd, were better inform'd of the ſtrength of the enemy, and follow'd him with their forces to ſuccour him. They came too late to do any good, further than to recover the dead body of *Clarence*. Nevertheleſs the *Scots* had taken from off his helmet the rich diadem or coronet before ſpoken of. *Alexander Macelſelan* was the perſon that did it, he brought it into *England* and ſold it to *John Steward* of *Derby* for a thouſand angels: *Steward* pawn'd it afterwards to *Robert Uſton* for 2500 pounds *.

If this be ſo, we may very reaſonably imagine, that the piece of plate found in *Riſley* Park, which was the gift of the pious biſhop of *Tholouſe*, 1000 years before to the church of *Bouge*, came thro' the like hands, that were quarter'd in the very church. *Riſley* Park is about 5 miles off *Derby*, and juſt by *Dale-Abby*, where poſſibly the plate was given for an ornament to the altar there. At the time of the diſſolution, it was here hidden, probably, to prevent the king's inquiſitors taking it. King *Harry* V. and his queen ignorant of the unfortunate blow, kept this *Eaſter* at *Leiceſter*.

I viſited *Riſley* the year after the plate was found, and the ſpot of ground in the park. 'Tis on the ſide of a hill facing the eaſt. 'Tis cloſe by the ſite of an antient ſeat in the park, of the Lords *Sheffield*, anceſtors to the Dukes of *Buckingham*, call'd *Wood-hall*. The motes remain where it ſtood, in a valley, between the lodge and the hill where the plate was found. This eſtate was purchas'd of them by the *Willoughbys* of *Riſley* 1587. From whom by an heireſs, it came to the *Grays*, now the poſſeſſion of the *Aſtons* aforementioned.

This, Sir, is all I can pretend to ſay at preſent, upon our *Derbyſhire* antiquity, in anſwer to the 3 queſtions I at firſt propos'd: Which I ſubmit to your judgment and ſagacity, in theſe Inquiries the ſtandard. I leave it diſquiſition of the *Northumbrian*

* *Says* Speed, *and ſome others.*

brian plate to the Antiquaries, with this hint; that it ſeems to me, the great St. *Wilfrid*, who built St. *Leonard*'s priory at *Stamford*, and the Epiſcopal church of *Hexham*, near where it was diſcovered, might probably bring it with him, from his journeys into *France* or *Italy*, and give it for the uſe of the altar there. *Pliny* in his natural hiſtory XXXIII. 11. ſpeaks of theſe kind of utenſils, of the ſhops that were famous for making them. He mentions the unaccountable humour of perpetually changing faſhions therein, as with us at this day. He ſpeaks of the *relievo* work, and in the next chapter, of the artiſts that have been famous therein. He particularly names *Acragas*, for deſigns in hunting. He ſays at laſt, the art became ſuddenly loſt, and the works were valu'd by their antiquity.

I am, &c.

April 5, 1736.

WILLIAM STUKELEY.

FINIS.

[illegible] plate to the Antiquaries, with this hint, that it seems to me, the great St. [illegible], who built St. Lucian's priory at [illegible], and the Episcopal church of [illegible], near where it was discovered, might probably bring it with him, from his journeys into France or Italy, and give it for the use of the altar there. Pliny in his natural history XXXIII. 11. speaks of these kind of tutorias, of the sorts that were famous for making them. He mentions the [illegible] of [illegible] changing [illegible] sheriff, as with us at this day. He speaks of the [illegible] work, and in the next chapter of the artists that have been famous therein. He particularly names [illegible], for designs in Painting. He sees at last, the art became [illegible] and the works were valid'd by their antiquity.

I am, &c.

[illegible] 5, 1736.

WILLIAM STUKELEY.

FINIS.